

# Salt River Fire Department Operating Guidelines

## Command Procedures

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### Purpose

The Salt River Fire Department responds to a wide range of emergency incidents. In order to effectively manage personnel and resources and to provide for the safety and welfare of personnel, The Salt River Fire Department will always operate within the Incident Command System at the incident scene. This procedure identifies the Standard Operating Guidelines to be employed in establishing Command and all the components of the Incident Command System.

### Command Procedures are designed to:

- Fix the responsibility for Command on a certain individual through a standard identification system, depending on the arrival sequence of members, companies, and Command officers.
- Ensure that a strong, direct, and visible Command will be established from the onset of the incident.
- Establish an effective incident organization defining the activities and responsibilities assigned to the Incident Commander and the other individuals operating within the Incident Command System.
- Provide a system to process information to support incident management, planning, and decision-making.
- Provide a system for the orderly transfer of Command to subsequent arriving officers.

### Responsibilities of Command

The Incident Commander is responsible for the completion of the Strategic Goals. The Strategic Goals (listed in order of priority) are:

- A. Remove endangered occupants and treat the injured.
- B. Stabilize the incident and provide for life safety.
- C. Conserve property.
- D. Provide for the safety, accountability, and welfare of personnel. This priority is ongoing throughout the incident.

The Incident Command System is used to facilitate the completion of the Strategic Goals.

The Incident Commander (IC) is the person who drives the command system towards that end.

The Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for building a Command structure that matches the organizational needs of the incident to achieve the completion of the Strategic Goals for the incident.

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The Functions of Command defines standard activities that are performed by the Incident Commander to achieve the Strategic Goals.

### Functions of Command

The Functions of Command include:

- Assume and announce Command and establish an effective operating position (Command Post).
- Rapidly evaluate the situation (size up).
- Initiate, maintain, and control the communications process.
- Assign a RIC or IRIC before an entry team can enter a working fire or IDLH atmosphere unless standard exceptions exist. Make it a priority to upgrade IRICs to a full RIC as soon as feasible.
- Identify the overall strategy, develop an incident management plan, and assign companies and personnel consistent with plans and standard operating procedures.
- Develop an effective Incident Command organization.
- Review, evaluate, and revise (as needed) the Incident Management plan.
- Provide for the continuity, transfer, and termination of Command.

The Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for all of these functions. As Command is transferred, so is the responsibility for these functions. The first five (5) functions must be addressed immediately from the initial assumption of Command.

### Establishing Command

The first fire department member or unit to arrive at the scene of a multiple unit response shall assume command of the incident. The initial Incident Commander (IC) shall remain in Command until Command is transferred or the incident is stabilized and Command is terminated.

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One or two company responses that are not going to escalate beyond the commitment of these companies do not require a formal activation of the Incident Command System (as on-scene report with the assumption of Command). The first arriving unit or officer will, however remain responsible for any needed Command functions. Examples would include:

- Still assignments. (Car fires, Dumpster fires, etc.)
- Special duty assignments.
- Any EMS calls requiring only one or two companies.

The first arriving fire department unit initiates the command process by giving an initial radio report.

The Radio Report shall include:

- A. Unit designation of the unit arriving on the scene.
- B. A brief description of the incident situation, (i.e. building size, occupancy, HazMat release, multi-vehicle accident, etc.)
- C. Obvious conditions (working fire, HazMat spill, multiple patients, etc.)
- D. Brief description of action taken.
- E. Declaration of Strategy (for structural fires this would be declaring an offensive or defensive mode).
- F. Any obvious safety concerns.
- G. Assumption and identification of Command.
- H. Assume & Announce accountability location.
- I. Assign the RIC/IRIC crew or identify exception (i.e., Known rescue, and incipient fire).

Example:

For an offensive structure fire –

"Engine 291 is on-the-scene of a large two story school with a working fire on the second floor. Engine 291 is laying a supply line and going in with a 1 3/4" hand-line. This is an offensive fire attack. Engine 291 will be Chaparral Street Command & IRIC."

IRIC/RIC assignment can be included in a follow-up report with accountability location.

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### For a defensive fire -"

"Engine 293 is on-the-scene of a medium size warehouse fully involved with exposures to the east. Engine 293 is laying a supply line and attacking the fire with a deck gun. This is a defensive fire. Engine 293 will be Indian Bend Command."

### For an E. M. S. incident -"

"Ladder 293 is on-the-scene with a multi-vehicle accident. Upgrade this to a first alarm medical with three ambulances. Truck 291 will be McKellips Command."

### Radio Designation

The radio designation "COMMAND" will be used along with the geographical location of the incident (i.e. "Alma School Command", "Pavilions Command"). This designation will not change throughout the duration of the incident. The designation of "Command" will remain with the officer currently in command of the incident throughout the event.

## Command Options

The responsibility of the first arriving unit or member to assume Command of the incident presents several options, depending on the situation. If a Chief Officer, member, or unit without tactical capabilities (i.e. staff vehicle, no equipment, etc.) initiates Command, the establishment of a Command Post should be a top priority. At most, incidents the initial Incident Commander will be the Company Officer. The following Command options define the Company Officer's direct involvement in tactical activities and the modes of Command that may be utilized.

### Nothing Showing - Investigative Mode:

These situations generally require investigation by the initial arriving company while other units remain in level one staging. The officer should go with the company to investigate, while utilizing a portable radio to command the incident. RIC or IRIC requirement can be waived when fires are in an incipient stage that could be controlled by portable fire extinguisher.

### Fast Attack - Mobile Command Mode:

There are situations that require immediate action to stabilize and require the Company Officer's assistance and direct involvement in the attack. In these situations, the Company Officer goes with the crew to provide the appropriate level of supervision. Prior to entry into a working structure fire a RIC or IRIC must be assigned. Examples of these situations include:

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- Offensive fire attacks (especially in marginal situations).
- Critical life safety situations (i.e. rescue) must be achieved in a compressed time.
- Any incident where the safety and welfare of fire fighters is a major concern.
- Obvious working incidents that require further investigation by the Company Officer.

RIC or IRIC requirement can be waived when there is a known life hazard situation where immediate action could prevent the loss of life.

Where fast intervention is critical, utilization of the portable radio will permit the Company Officer's involvement in the attack without neglecting command responsibilities. The Fast-attack-mobile Command mode should not last more than a few minutes and will end with one of the following:

- A. Situation is stabilized.
- B. Situation is not stabilized and the Company Officer must withdraw to the exterior and establish a Command Post. At some time, the Company Officer must decide whether to withdraw the remainder of the crew, based on the crew's capabilities and experience, safety issues, and the ability to communicate with the crew. No crew should remain in a hazardous area without radio communication capabilities.
- C. Command is transferred to another Company or Command Officer. When a Command Officer is assuming Command, the Command Officer may opt to return the Company Officer to his/her crew, utilize the Company Officer as staff support, or assign him/her as a Group/Division Officer.

### **Command Mode - Stationary Command Post:**

Certain incidents, by virtue of their size, complexity, or potential for rapid expansion, require immediate strong, direct, overall Command. In such cases, the Company Officer will initially assume an exterior, safe, and effective command position and maintain that position until relieved by a Chief Officer. The tactical worksheet shall be initiated and utilized to assist in managing these types of incidents.

If the Company Officer assumes a Command mode, the following options are available concerning the assignment of the remaining crewmembers.

- A. The officer may "move up" within the Company and place the Company into action with two or three members. One of the crewmembers will serve as the acting Company Officer and must be provided with a portable radio. The collective and individual capabilities and experience of the crew will regulate this action.

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- B. The officer may assign the crewmembers to work under the supervision of another Company Officer. In such cases, the Officer assuming Command must communicate with the Officer of the other Company and indicate the assignment of those personnel.
- C. The officer may elect to assign the crewmembers to perform staff functions to assist Command, such as information reconnaissance, filling out the tactical worksheet, etc.
- D. The officer must assign a RIC or IRIC, prior to an entry team entering into a working structure fire unless a standard exception is present (see Rapid intervention Crews). The Command officer can be a member of the IRIC (donned turnouts and access to an SCBA) if the other IRIC member is in position tracking the interior personnel and can initiate a rescue.

A Company Officer assuming Command has a choice of modes and degrees of personal involvement in the tactical activities, but continues to be fully responsible for the Command functions. The initiative and judgment of the Officer are of great importance. The modes identified are guidelines to assist the Officer in planning appropriate actions. The actions initiated should conform to one of the above-mentioned modes of operation.

## Transfer of Command

Command is transferred to improve the quality of the Command organization. When Command is transferred, it should trigger upgrades in the Command structure. The following guidelines outline the transfer of Command:

- A. The first fire department member arriving on the scene will automatically assume Command. This will normally be a Company Officer, but could be any fire department member up to and including the Fire Chief.
- B. The first arriving Company Officer will assume Command after the Transfer of Command procedures have been completed (assuming an equal or higher-ranking officer has not already assumed Command).
- C. The first arriving Command Officer should assume Command of the incident following Transfer of Command procedures.
- D. The second arriving Command Officer should report to the Command Post, to assume the Support Officer position or assume the roll of Senior Advisor (overall Incident Commander).
- E. Assumption of Command is discretionary for Battalion Chiefs and the Fire Chief.



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In certain situations, it may be advantageous for the first arriving Incident Commander (i.e. Company Officer) to transfer Command to the next Company ON THE SCENE. This is indicated when the initial commitment of the first arriving Company requires a full crew (i.e., high-rise or an immediate rescue situation) and another Company or Command Officer is on the scene. When a Chief Officer arrives at the scene at the same time as the initial arriving Company, the Chief Officer should assume Command of the incident.

"Passing Command" to a unit that is not on the scene creates a gap in the Command process and compromises incident management. To prevent this "gap", COMMAND SHALL NOT BE TRANSFERRED TO AN OFFICER WHO IS NOT ON THE SCENE. It is preferable to have the initial arriving Company Officer continue to operate in the Fast-Attack mode until Command can be transferred to an arriving on-scene unit.

Should a situation occur where a later arriving Company or Command Officer cannot locate or communicate with Command (after several radio attempts), they will assume and announce their assumption of Command and initiate whatever actions are necessary to confirm the safety of the missing crew.

Within the chain of Command, the actual Transfer of Command will be regulated by the following procedure:

- A. The Officer assuming Command will communicate with the person being relieved by radio or face-to-face. Face-to-face is the preferred method to transfer Command.
- B. The person being relieved will brief the Officer assuming Command indicating at least the following:
  1. General situation status:
    - a. Incident conditions (fire location and extent, HazMat spill or release, number of patients, etc.)
    - b. Incident Management Plan
    - c. Completion of Tactical Objectives
    - d. Safety considerations
  2. Deployment and assignments of operating companies and personnel.

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### 3. Appraisal of need for additional resources

- C. The person being relieved of Command should review the tactical worksheet with the Officer assuming Command. This sheet provides the most effective framework for Command transfer as it outlines the location and status of personnel and resources in a standard form that should be well known to all members.

The arrival of a ranking Officer on the incident scene does not mean that Command has been automatically transferred to that Officer. Command is only transferred when the outlined "Transfer of Command process" has been completed.

The person being relieved of Command will be assigned to the best advantage by the Officer assuming Command.

A ranking Officer may elect to have a subordinate continue the role of Incident Commander (IC). In cases where an individual is effectively commanding an incident, and satisfactory progress is being made to bring the incident under control, it may be desirable for that person to continue in an active Command role. The ranking Officer must determine that the Incident Commander (IC) is completely aware of the position and function of operating companies and the general status of the situation. In these cases, the arriving ranking Officer may assume a supportive role in the overall Command function. The ranking Officer will assume responsibility for the incident by virtue of being involved in the Command process.

### Tidbits:

The response and arrival of additional ranking Officers on the incident scene strengthens the overall Command function. As the incident escalates, the Incident Commander should use these Command Officers to fill Sector, Branch, and Section positions, strengthening the Command structure. Additional officers should be assigned to Accountability Officer positions as needed.

When the first arriving unit is a Command Officer, efforts should be automatically directed towards establishing a Command Post and fulfilling the Command functions. A Command Post in a vehicle equipped for this purpose is a priority at all working incidents. A vehicle, which provides appropriate workspace for the Incident Commander and staff personnel, lighting, communications equipment, supplies reference items, and some isolation from outside distractions, will make Command more effective.

Company and Command Officers should eliminate all unnecessary radio traffic while responding, unless such communications are required to ensure that Command functions are initiated and completed. This requires the initial Incident Commander (IC) to give a clear on-the-scene report and continue to give updated progress reports as needed.



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Chief Officers and Staff Personnel should report directly to the Command Post to notify the Incident Commander (IC) of their availability to assume incident duties. These personnel should park their vehicles in a location that does not restrict access to the scene and report to the Command Post for assignment.

The Incident Commander is responsible for managing the incident. The fire department empowers that individual (the Incident Commander) with the authority to turn his/her decisions into actions (formulate a plan and assign companies). Simply stated, the Incident Commander outranks everybody\*. If a higher-ranking Officer wants to effect a change in the management of an incident, he/she must first be on the scene of the incident, and then utilize the Transfer of Command procedure.

*\*Anyone can effect a change in incident management in extreme situations relating to safety by notifying Command and initiating corrective action.*

## Command Staff

The incident scene is often a dynamic, intense, and exciting place. As the incident grows into and past the requirements of a first alarm assignment, the Incident Commander (IC) can become overloaded and overwhelmed with information management, assigning Companies, filling out and updating the tactical worksheet, planning, forecasting, calling for additional resources, talking on the radio, and fulfilling all the other functions of Command. The immediate need of Command at this point in the incident is support.

The Incident Commander should utilize the next arriving Command Officer as a Safety Officer. If the Incident Commander is still playing catch up with the functions of Command; this would be a reason to assign the second Command Officer to a support role.

### Roles and Responsibilities of the Support Officer:

- Define, evaluate, and recommend changes to the plan.
- Provide direction relating to tactical priorities, specific critical fireground factors and safety.
- Evaluate the need for additional resources.
- Assign logistics responsibilities.
- Assist with the tactical worksheet for control and accountability.
- Evaluate the fireground organization and span of control.
- Other duties as necessary.

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## Command Structure

It is the responsibility of Command to develop an organizational structure, using standard operating guidelines, to effectively manage the incident scene. The development of the organizational structure should begin with deployment of the first arriving fire department unit and continue through a number of phases, depending on the size and complexity of the incident. The Command organization must develop at a pace, which stays ahead of the tactical deployment of personnel and resources. In order for the Incident Commander to manage the incident, he/she must first be able to direct, control, and track the position and function of all operating Companies. Building a Command organization is the best support mechanism the Incident Commander can utilize to achieve the harmonious balance between managing personnel and incident needs. Simply put, this means:

Large scale and complex incidents = Unified Command.

Small scale and simple incidents = Single Command.

- The Incident Commander should have more people working than commanding.
- The basic configuration of Command includes three levels:
  1. Strategic Level - Overall direction of the incident.
  2. Tactical Level - Objectives assigned to Sectors.
  3. Task Level - Task objectives assigned to Companies.

The Strategic Level involves the overall Command of the incident. The IC is responsible for the strategic level of the command structure. The Strategic Plan defines where and when resources will be assigned to the incident and control the situation. This plan is the basis for developing a Command organization, assigning all resources and establishing Tactical Objectives by priority. The Strategic Level responsibilities include:

- Determining the appropriate strategy: OFFENSIVE OR DEFENSIVE
- Establishing a strategic plan for the incident.
- Setting priorities.
- Obtaining and allocating resources.

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- Predicting outcomes and planning.
- Assigning specific objectives to tactical level units.

The Tactical Level directs activities toward specific objectives. Tactical Level Officers include Sector Officers, who are in charge of grouped resources. Tactical Level Officers (Sector Officers) are responsible for specific geographic areas or functions, and supervising personnel assigned to the sector. A sector assignment comes with the authority to make decisions and assignments, within the boundaries of the overall plan and safety conditions. The accumulated achievements of Tactical Objectives should accomplish the Strategic Level goals.

## Command Structure - Basic Organization

The Task Level refers to those activities normally accomplished by individual companies or specific personnel. The task level is where the work is actually done. Task level activities are routinely supervised by Company Officers. The accumulated achievements of Task Level activities should accomplish Tactical Objectives.

Examples:

The most basic Command structure combines all three levels of the Command structure. The Company Officer on a single engine response to a dumpster fire determines the strategy and tactics, and supervises the crew doing the task.

**COMMAND  
E-291**

**STRATEGY  
TACTICAL  
TASK**

The basic structure for a "routine" incident, involving a small number of companies, requires only two levels of the Command structure. The role of Command combines the strategic and tactical levels. Companies report directly to Command and operate at the Task Level.

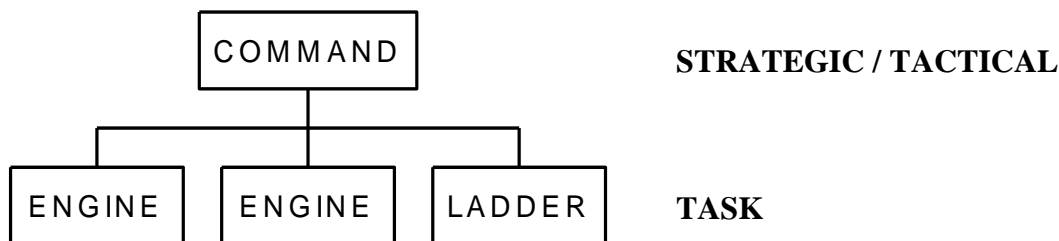
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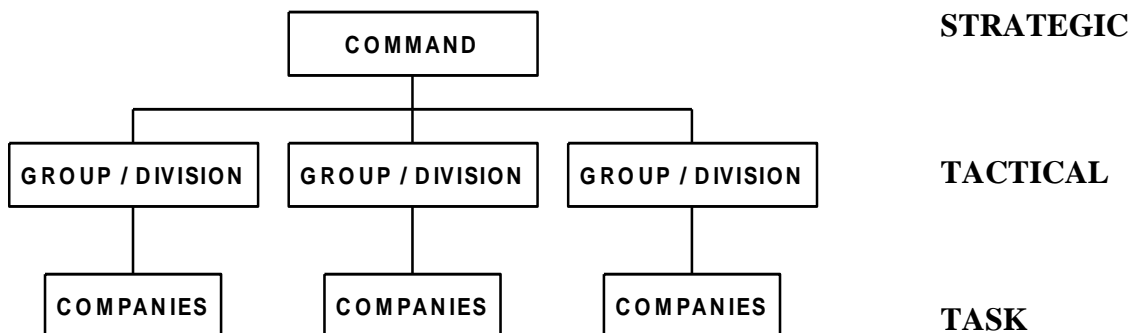
### Officers

Complex emergencies often exceed the capability of one officer to effectively manage the entire operation. The Incident Commander should group companies to work in “Groups or Divisions.” Groups and Divisions reduce the span of control to more manageable smaller sized units. Groups and/or Divisions allow the Incident Commander to communicate principally with Group and / or Division Officers, rather than multiple, individual Company Officers, thus providing an effective Command structure and incident scene organization. Generally, group/division responsibilities should be assigned early in the incident, typically to the first Company assigned to a geographic area (North Division) or function (Vent Group). This early establishment of groups and divisions provides an effective Incident Command organization framework on which the operation can be built and expanded.

***GEOGRAPHIC AREA = DIVISION / FUNCTION = GROUP***

As groups and divisions are implemented, Command continues to operate at the strategic level, determining the overall strategy to deal with the incident.

### Basic Incident Command Organization



### Command Structure – Groups and/or Divisions, Basic Operational Approach

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Normally, at this type of incident, a Company Officer can effectively supervise his/her own crew and direct and coordinate the efforts of one or two additional companies assigned to his/her group or division. As operations, expand in complexity and size, and as additional Chief Officers become available, the Incident Commander should assign them to relieve Company Officers and assume group responsibilities.

The use of Groups and Divisions in the Command organization provides a standard system to divide the incident scene into smaller subordinate Command units or areas.

The number of groups and/or divisions that can be effectively managed by the Incident Commander varies. In fast moving complex operations, a span of control of three to seven with five groups and/or divisions being optimal.

Where the number of groups and/or divisions exceeds the span of control that the Incident Commander can effectively manage, the Incident Organization should be divided to Branches. Each Branch is responsible for several groups and/or divisions and should be assigned a separate radio channel.

Groups and/or Divisions also provide an array of major functions, which may be selectively implemented according to the needs of a particular situation. This places responsibility for the details and execution of each particular function on a Group and / or Division Officer.

When effective sectors have been established, the Incident Commander can concentrate on overall strategy and resource allocation, allowing the Group and / or Division Officers to manage their assigned units. The Incident Commander determines strategic goals and assigns tactical objectives and resources to the groups and/or divisions. Each Group and / or Division Officer is responsible for the tactical deployment of the resources at his/her disposal in order to complete the Tactical Objectives assigned by the Incident Commander. Group and / or Division Officers are also responsible for communicating needs and progress to Command.

Groups / Divisions reduce the overall amount of radio communications. Most routine communications within a group / division should be conducted in a face-to-face manner between Company Officers and their Group or Division Officer. This process reduces unnecessary radio traffic and increases ability to transmit critical radio communications.

The safety of firefighting personnel represents the major reason for establishing Groups / Divisions. Each Group or Division Officer must maintain communication with assigned Companies to control both their position and function. The Group or Division Officer must constantly monitor all

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hazardous situations and risks to personnel. The Group and / or Division Officer must take appropriate action to ensure that companies are operating in a safe and effective manner.

Command should begin to assign groups / divisions based on the following factors:

- Situations that will eventually involve a number of Companies or functions, beyond the capability of Command to directly control. Command should initially assign sector responsibilities to the first Companies assigned to a geographic area or function until Chief Officers are available.
- When Command can no longer effectively cope with (or manage) the number of Companies currently involved in the operation.
- When companies are involved in complex operations (Large interior or geographic area, hazardous materials, technical rescues, etc.)
- When companies are operating from tactical positions, which Command has little or no direct control over (i.e. out of sight).
- When the situation presents special hazards and close control is required over operating companies (i.e., unstable structural conditions, hazardous materials, heavy fire load, marginal offensive situations, etc.).

When establishing a group / division, the Incident Commander will assign each a Group and / or Division Officer:

- A. Tactical Objectives
- B. A radio designation (Roof Division, East Division, etc.)
- C. The identity of resources assigned to the group and / or division.

Groups and Divisions will be regulated by the following guidelines:

- It will be the ongoing responsibility of Command to assign groups and divisions required for effective emergency operations; this assignment will relate to both geographic and functional sectors.
- Command shall advise each Group and / or Division Officer of specific Tactical Objectives. The overall strategy and plan will and should be provided (time permitting), so the Group and / or Division Officer has some idea of what is going on and how his/her assignment fits in.



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- The number of Companies assigned to a group or division will depend upon conditions within that group or division. Command will maintain an awareness of the number of Companies operating within a group or division and the capability of that Group and / or Division Officer to effectively direct operations. If a Group and / or Division Officer cannot control the resources within the group or division, he/she should notify the Incident Commander so that group / division responsibilities can be split or other corrective action taken. In most cases five (5) Companies represents the maximum span of control for a Group and / or Division Officer.
- Groups / Divisions assigned to specific operating areas will be designated by directions (East Division, North Division, etc.). Where incidents involve odd geographic boundaries (Bunnyville), it may be confusing to assign directional designations to Divisions (East Division, etc.). An alternate use of Division A, B, C, or D may be used. Division "A" would be the front of the building and the other sectors would go clockwise around the building in alphabetical order.

In multi-story occupancies, sectors will usually be indicated by floor numbers (Division 15 indicates 15<sup>th</sup> floor). In some cases the floor division identification may be subdivided into geographic areas such as "Division 15 East" or "Division 15 West" depending on stairwell and floor access.

- Functional sectors will be identified by the function (Loss Control Group, Safety Group, Ventilation Group, etc.).

Group and / or Division Officer will use the group or division designation in radio communications (i.e. "North Division to Command").

Groups and/or Divisions will be commanded by a Group and / or Division Officer. Group and / or Division Officer can be Chief Officers, Company Officers, or any other Fire Department member designated by Command.

In many cases, the initial group or division responsibility will be given to the Company Officer who receives the initial assignment to a basic tactical position or function (north, treatment, roof, etc.) Command will assign a Command (Chief) Officer to assume group or division responsibilities as soon as possible.

Regular Transfer of Command procedures will be followed in transferring group or division responsibility.

In some cases, a Group and / or Division Officer may be assigned to an area/function initially to evaluate and report conditions and advise Command of needed tasks and resources. The assigned Officer will proceed to the group or division, evaluate and report conditions to the Incident

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Commander, and assume responsibility for directing resources and operations within his/her assigned area of responsibility.

The Group and / or Division Officer must be in a position to directly supervise and monitor operations. This will require the Group and / or Division Officer to be equipped with the appropriate protective clothing and equipment for his/her area of responsibility.

Group and / or Division Officer will be responsible for and in control of all assigned functions within their sector. This requires each Sector Officer to:

- A. Complete objectives assigned by Command.
- B. Account for all assigned personnel.
- C. Ensure that operations are conducted safely.
- D. Monitor work progress.
- E. Redirect activities as necessary.
- F. Coordinate actions with related activities, and adjacent sectors.
- G. Monitor welfare of group / division personnel.
- H. Request additional resources as needed.
- I. Provide Command with essential and frequent progress reports.
- J. Re-allocate resources within the group and/or division.

The Group and / or Division Officer should be readily identifiable and maintain a visible position as much as possible.

The primary function of Company Officer working within a group and / or division is to direct the operations of their individual crews in performing assigned task. Company Officers will advise their Group and / or Division Officer of work progress, preferably face-to-face. All requests for additional resources or assistance within a group or division must be directed to the Group and / or Division Officer. The Group and / or Division Officer will communicate with "Command".

Each Group and / or Division Officer will keep Command informed of conditions and progress in the sector through regular progress reports. The Group and / or Division Officer must prioritize progress reports to essential information only.

**Command must be advised immediately of significant changes, particularly those involving the ability or inability to complete an objective, hazardous conditions, accidents, structural collapse, etc.**

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When a Company is assigned from Staging to an Operating group or division, the Company will be told what group / division and which Group and / or Division Officer they will be reporting to. The Group and / or Division Officer will be informed of which particular companies or units have been assigned by the Incident Commander. It is then the responsibility of the Group and / or Division Officer to contact the assigned Company to transmit any instructions relative to the specific action requested.

Group and / or Division Officer will monitor the condition of the crews operating in their group / division. Relief crews will be requested in a manner to safeguard the safety of personnel and maintain progress toward the group/division objectives.

Group and / or Division Officer will ensure an orderly and thorough reassignment of crews to Rehab group. Crews must report to rehab intact to facilitate accountability.

### Command Structure – Expanding the Organization; Branch Officers

As the incident organization grows in complexity, and the span of control with groups and divisions is maximized, the Incident Commander may implement an additional intermediate level within the Command Organization. The Branch level of the organization is designed to provide COORDINATION between the groups / divisions and Command. Branch officers supervise and manage a number of Group and / or Division Officer, and report to the Incident Commander.

Strategic Level - Incident Commander

Coordination Level – Branch Officers

Tactical Level – Group / Divisions Officers

Task Level - Companies

Branch Officers should be utilized at incidents where the span of control with sectors is maximized, incidents involving two or more distinctly different major management component (i.e. a large fire with a major evacuation, a large fire with a large number of patients). The Incident Commander may elect to assign Branch Officers as forward positions to coordinate the activities between groups or divisions.

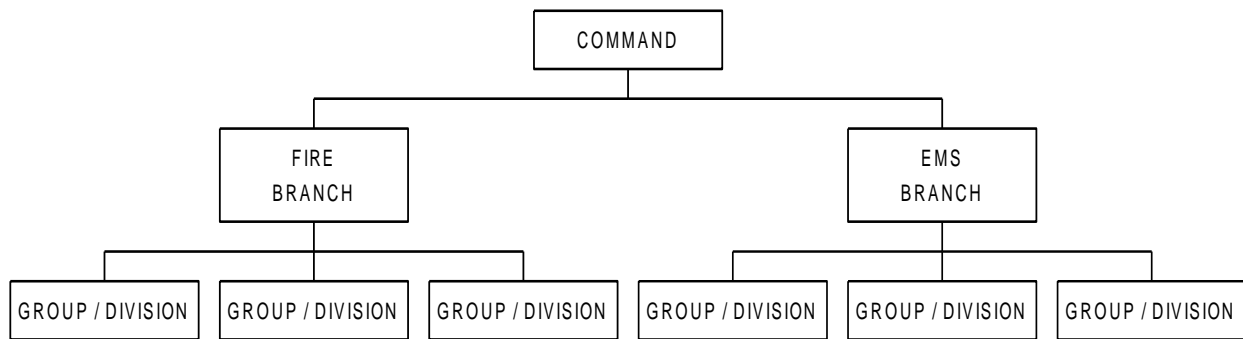
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The intent of the Branch Level of the Command structure is to split an incident into manageable components and reduce the span of control. Branch Officers will normally be utilized at very large-scale incidents that involve two or more major components. The following types of incidents are examples where Branch Officers should be utilized:

- A Hazmat incident that requires a major evacuation.
- A large-scale incident spread over a wide geographic area.
- An incident with mass casualties and a significant hazard (i.e. fire, Hazmat, plane crash, floods, etc.)
- Campaign High-rise fires.
- Any incident where the number of groups or divisions exceed the span of control that can be effectively managed by the Incident Commander.

Branch Officers manage and direct activities of Group or Division Officers. Branch Officers should operate on separate radio channels if possible. The radio designation of Branch Officers should reflect the function or geographic area of the Branch (i.e. Fire Control Branch, EMS Branch, West Branch, etc.). When Command implements Branch Officers, the Group or Division Officers should be notified by Command of their new supervisor. This information should include:

- A. What Branch the group and/or branch is now assigned to.
- B. The radio channel the Branch, group and/or division is operating on.

Radio Communications should then be directed from the Group or Division Officer to the Branch Officer instead of Command. Group or Division Officers will relay this information to the Companies working in their group / division.

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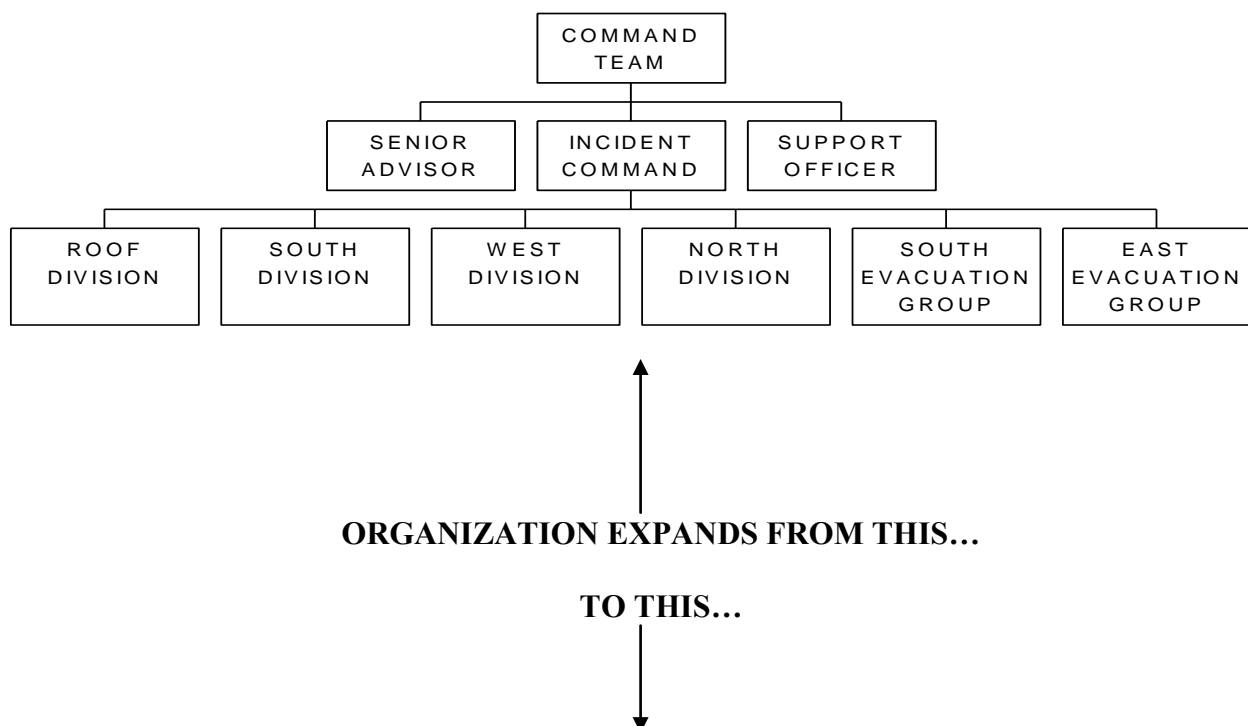
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Branch Officers positions should be assigned to Chief Officers. Depending on the situation, Branch Officers may be located at the Command Post or at a remote location. When located at the Command Post, Branch Officers can communicate on a face-to-face basis with the Incident Commander and/or the Operations Officer. When an incident encompasses a large geographic area it may be more effective to have Branch Officers in forward operating positions. When Branch Officers are sent to forward positions, they should utilize a Command Officer's vehicle as a forward Branch Command Post (when feasible). In these situations, Command must assign Officers in the Command Post to monitor each Branch radio channel.

Command may occasionally be faced with a situation where he/she has very little control over operational groups or division(s). This would include groups and/or divisions in conflicting positions (personnel blasting one another with hose streams), multiple groups and/or divisions into each other, defensive fire operations in one area and offensive operations in the adjoining fire area. Command should utilize a Branch Officer in these types of situations to go to a forward position and coordinate the activities of these groups and/or divisions.

Branch Officers are not limited to Operations. Any of the Section Officers may also implement Branches within their individual sections as needed.



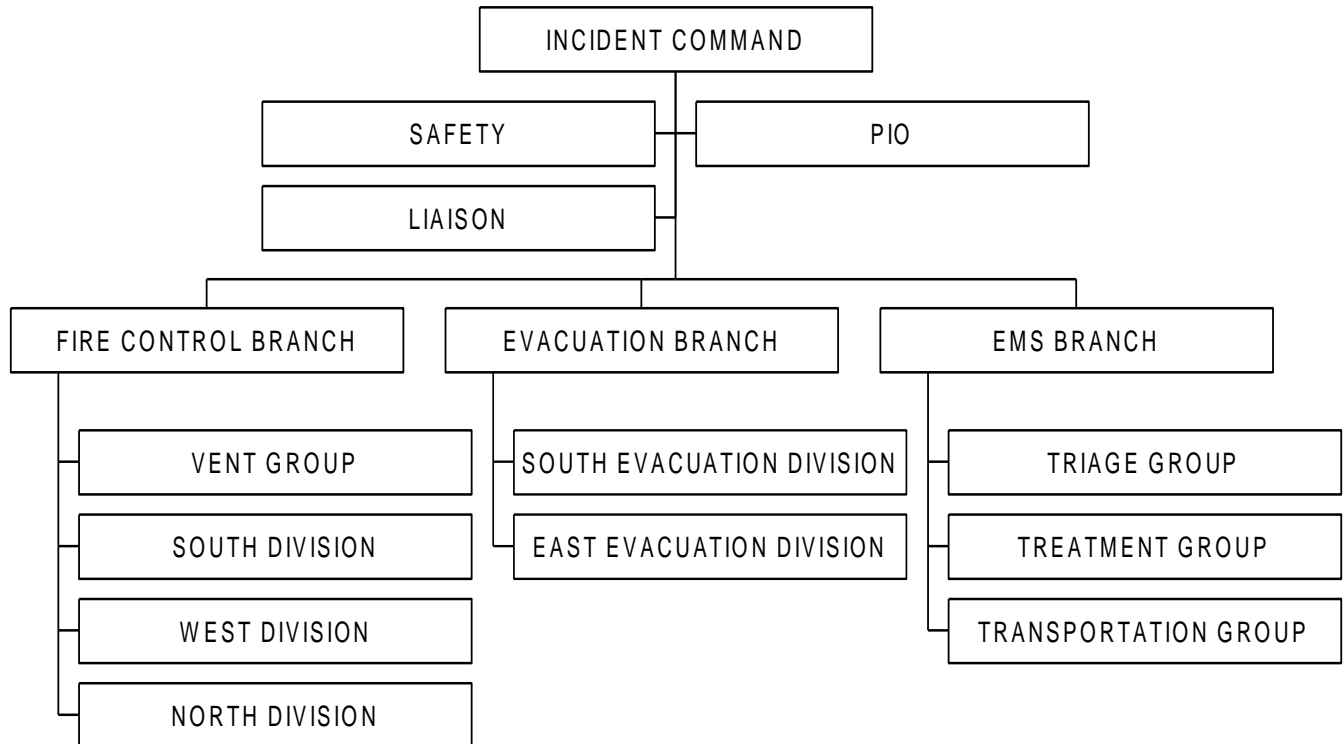
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## Command Structure - Expansion to Major Operations

### Sections

As a small incident escalates into a major incident, additional organizational support will be required. As additional ranking officers arrive on the scene, the Command Post organization (Team) may be expanded through the involvement of Command Officers and staff personnel to fill “**Sections**” positions. Section Officers assist the Incident Command Staff with the overall management of the incident scene and operate at the Strategic Level. The Incident Commander implements section as needed, depending on the situation, and priority of needs (One incident may only require a Logistics Section while another incident may require all the “Sections” to be implemented.)

Where the communications system permits, Section Officers should operate on separate radio channels and utilize the radio designation that identifies their section (Planning, Logistics, etc.).



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During the initial phases of the incident the initial Incident Commander and his/her staff normally carry out these four section functions. The Fire Department's involvement and needs at the incident scene can be divided into four sections. They are:

LOGISTICS SECTION

PLANNING SECTION

OPERATIONS SECTION

ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION

The Logistics Section is the support mechanism for the organization. Logistics provides services and support systems to all the organizational components involved in the incident. The Logistics Section also responsible for the accountability of all the personnel working in the hazard zone of the incident. Command may assign the Logistics Section its own radio channel. The Logistic Section Officer may establish branches for his/her section as needed.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Manage rehab.
- Provide Accountability
- Manage personnel accountability within the hazard zone.
- Manage staging.
- Provide and manage any needed supplies or equipment.
- Forecast and obtain future resource needs (coordinate with the Planning Section).
- Provide any needed communications equipment.
- Provide fuel and needed repairs for equipment.
- Obtain specialized equipment or expertise per Command.
- Provide food and associated supplies.

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- Secure any needed fixed or portable facilities.
- Coordinate immediate Critical Incident Stress Debriefing.
- Provide any other logistical needs as requested by Command.
- Supervise assigned personnel.

The Planning Section is responsible for gathering, assimilating, analyzing, and processing information needed for effective decision-making. Information management is a full-time task at large and complex incidents. The Planning Section serves as the Incident Commander's clearinghouse for information. This allows the Incident Commander to have a single person provide him/her with information instead of having to deal with dozens of information sources. Critical information should be immediately forwarded to Command (or whoever needs it). Information should also be used to make long-range plans. The Planning Section Chief's goal is to plan ahead of current events and to identify the need for resources before they are needed.

## Roles and Responsibilities

- Evaluate current strategy and plan with the Incident Commander.
- Refine and recommend any needed changes to plan.
- Evaluate Incident Organization and span of control.
- Forecast possible outcome(s).
- Evaluate future resource requirements.
- Utilize technical assistance as needed.
- Evaluate tactical priorities, specific critical factors, and safety.
- Gather, update, improve, and manage information with a standard systematic approach.
- Liaison with any needed outside agencies for planning needs.

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The Operations Section is responsible for the tactical priorities, and the safety and welfare of the personnel working in the Operations Section. The Operations Section Officer uses the tactical radio channel to communicate strategic and specific objectives to Branch Officers.

### Roles and Responsibilities:

- Coordinate activities with the Incident Commander.
- Implement the Incident Management Plan.
- Assign units to Groups / Divisions based on Tactical Objectives and priorities.
- Build an effective organizational structure through the use of Groups / Divisions.
- Provide Groups / Divisions Tactical Objectives.
- Manage Operation Branch activities.
- Provide for life safety.
- Determine needs and request additional resources.
- Consult with and inform other sections and the Incident Command Staff as needed.

If the Operations Officer is located at the Command Post, he/she should use the radio designation of "Command". The vast majority of incidents can be effectively managed without an Operations Officer, or with the Operations Officer located at the Command Post. If the Operations Officer is located out of the Command Post at a "forward" position (i.e. in a high-rise building), he/she should use the radio designation of "Operations".

**Implementing an "Operations" radio designation in the middle of a major incident can create some confusion with radio communications. It is absolutely essential that all personnel operating at the incident be made aware of the activation of "Operations". All Group / Division Officers must then direct their communications to the "Operations" Officer.**

The Operations Officer will communicate with the Incident Commander to request additional resources, provide progress reports, etc.

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Once implemented, "Operations" becomes a forward Command Post. As such, the Operations Officer will need some personnel assigned to assist as staff members to help with radios, tactical worksheets, etc.

## The Incident Commander - Role and Responsibilities after Activation of an Operations Officer

Once the Operations Officer is in place and functioning, the Incident Commander's focus should be on the strategic issues, overall strategic planning and other components of the incident. This focus is to look at the "big picture" and the impact of the incident from a broad perspective. The Incident Commander should provide direction, advice and guidance to the Operations Officer in directing the tactical aspects of the incident.

- Review and evaluate the plan, and initiate any needed changes.
- Provide on-going review of the overall incident (THE BIG PICTURE).
- Select priorities.
- Provide direction to the Operations Officer.
- Review the organizational structure, initiate change or expansion to meet incident needs.
- Initiate Groups / Divisions functions as required.
- Establish liaison with other city agencies and officials, outside agencies, property owners and/or tenants.
- Other duties as necessary.

In order to maintain continuity and overall effectiveness, the Incident Commander and Operations Officer should normally be in the Command Post together.

The Administration Section evaluates and manages the risk and financial requirements for the Fire Department's involvement in the incident.

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### Roles and Responsibilities:

- Procurement of services and/or supplies from sources within and outside the Salt River Fire Department or Community as requested by Command (coordinates with Logistics).
- Documenting all financial costs of the incident.
- Documenting for possible cost recovery for services and/or supplies.
- Analyzing and managing legal risk for incidents such as a hazardous materials clean up.
- Serves as the Incident Commander's liaison with: City officials, Litigators (and other lawyer types). Regulatory agencies (EPA, OSHA, DOT, FBI, etc.).
- Monitors and coordinates emergency service delivery to the rest of the community during major incidents to ensure adequate coverage.
- Serves as the E.O.C. (Emergency Operations Center) representative in the Command Post and provides briefings to the E.O.C. staff.
- Manage investigations (arson, etc.).
- Manage critique preparations.

The Administration Section is responsible for obtaining any and all needed incident documentation for potential cost recovery efforts, or litigation, including criminal charges.

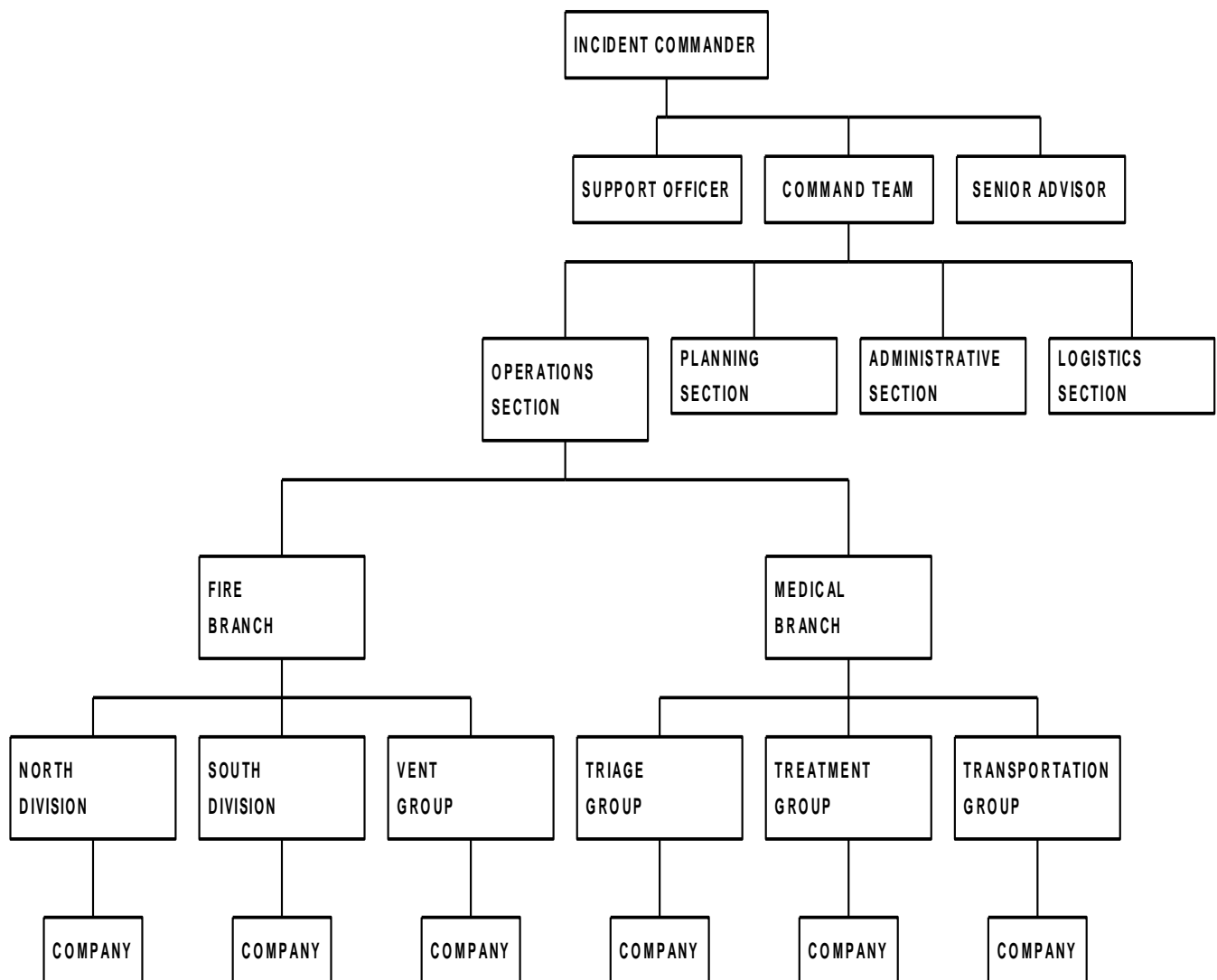
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**COMMAND STRUCTURE – EXPANDING THE ORGANIZATION; SECTIONS IN PLACE.**